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NORTHEASTERN DENE POLITICAL SUB-CULTURE AND THE PROBLEM OF LEGITIMACY:
SOME INTERPRETATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Political structures whether they are viewed from the perspetive of a developing nation or region or a developed one are legitimate if the values or goals of the society, the attitudes or beliefs, sentiments and expectations of citizens, and the norms or rules governing political behaviour are favourably disposed towards or are supportive of these structures. In other words, political structures (their functions, incumbents and decisions) are legitimate if they are congruent with a political culture. Implicit in this condition for legitimacy is the assumption that legitimacy is more likely to exist when there is a common political culture. Suppose, however, that a common political culture does not exist; instead, there are a variety of powerful groups within a nation or region which do not share the same values, attitudes and norms in regard to politics. In such a situation legitimacy is tenuous. What, then, must be done to strengthen or create legitimacy? For one thing, even if the structures remain culturally incongruent, legitimacy can be produced by ensuring that policies pursued and generated by political structures are beneficial to citizens.[1] Also, legitimacy can be created through a process of mobilizing and socializing citizens.

The Northwest Territories of Canada, although not a nation by a politically developing region, lacks a common political culture; it is characterized by a variety of political sub-cultures which do not share the same values, attitudes and norms about politics. Policies pursued by the Government of the Northwest Territories are generally beneficial and oriented towards the development of the Northwest Territories for people resident in this region and, therefore, legitimacy exists in part. It would appear, however, from the content of recently introduced political and administrative reforms (discussed later) that there is recognition that beneficial policies are not the only means of creating legitimacy, particularly for obtaining the support of two major sub-cultures: the Indians and the Inuit of the Northwest Territories. What is being attempted, in addition, is the development of support or legitimacy of political structures by the mobilization and socialization of these two groups: to bring members of the groups who were originally outside output political structures such as the Territorial Council, Territorial bureaucracy, Executive Committee and municipal councils, inside these structures; to secure for the output structures at least a share of the support native people have given to structures such as the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories (IBNWT) and the Indian dominated Band Councils; and, to inculcate values, attitudes and norms which are favourable towards existing output structures. The question, however, that one must ask, and one which serves as the focal point of this paper, is will these be the consequences of the reforms?

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[1] I am grateful to Professor Richard Simeon of Queen's University for his comments on legitimacy and on how it might be applied within the context of the Northwest Territories. See also, S.M. Lipset, "Conditions of Stable and Effective Democracy", in H. Eckstein and D.E. Apter (eds.), Comparative Politics: A Reader, The Free Press, New York, 1963, pp. 208-213.

INTRODUCTION

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There are a number of methodological problems which present obstacles to evaluating whether or not the reforms will be successful in mobilizing and socializing native people. It must be recognized immediately, if it has not been already, that attaining the above objectives is a long-term process and, likewise, any evaluation of the effectiveness of the reforms is also a long-term process. Further, there is a dearth of data on the political development of the Northwest Territories, particularly on its political sub-cultures. There does not exist full and systematic data of, for example, the Almond and Verba type [2] which can be offered as empirical evidence substantiating any conclusions that could be drawn about the consequences of the reforms or, for that matter, on any issues related to the legitimacy of existing political structures such as the extent to which policies of the Government of the Northwest Territories are indeed supported by members of the various sub-cultures. Having stated this, then, how can one discuss the attempts being made to mobilize and socialize native groups and the probable consequences? Before one can even begin to assess the effectivenss of the reforms, certain issues related to political sub-cultures must be examined by utilizing existing literature such as anthropological studies (some of which are out-dated), using these as a base for extrapolation; and, where no such data exists, substituting one's own evaluation and interpretation. This is exactly the procedure used in this paper and, understandably, the reader is forewarned that the material included here is speculative and should be interpreted with caution.

Using the Indian people of the Northwest Territories as a unit of analysis and working on the assumption that they represent a clearly defined group the essential characteristics of their political culture are described. The major socialization agents of a political nature which have been instrumental in shaping the political culture of this group are identified. Also, the impact of these agents on Indian political structures, and the values, norms and attitudes associated with these structures will be determined. Having accomplished this, we can reasonably identify which political structures have been legitimized by Indians and for what reason(s). It will then be possible to speculate on the consequences of the reforms not only as they pertain to legitimacy but also to the changes that may occur to the Indian political culture.

POLITICAL SUB-CULTURE

The Northwest Territories is in a transitional state of political development and a common political culture does not exist. Instead, we find a number of isolated groups, pledging allegiance to different structural norms and legitimizing selected political structures. One such group is the Indian

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people including the Hares, Satudene, Mountain Indians, Slaves, Dogribs, Yellowknives and Chipewyans. This group of people is normally referred to as the Northeastern Denes or Athabascans and, although all shared "the simple or 'basic' northern Athabascan social culture -- that is, (they lacked) obvious borrowings of elements of social organizations from either the Northwest Coast or the Plains culture",[3] the political culture of this group, as it exists now, is an amalgam of traditional Athabascan and Euro-Canadian political values, attitudes and norms.

Before contact with Europeans, Indian political structures were not highly specialized, instead there existed an "unstructured milieu of group 'government' by consensus and custom".[4] The diffuse organizations of Indian people displayed an absence of "co-ordination and role and power differentiations". In the political sense there was no form of government, police and regulation[6] of the type known to us nor was there "regularity of assembly or personnel". Role structures were not differentiated from the ceremonial, military and social life of Indian society. The only differentiation in role, if it existed at all, was that of the chief which, in essence, was diffuse and total rather than specific and instrumental. For example, the chief normally assumed the role of leader of the band, war leader and the duties of a trading chief. The stability of his position was determined by his kinship relationships, personal abilities and recognition by the trader that the former, in fact, was the trading chief for the band.[7] Of this initial state of Indian political culture, some very important ancestral values such as individual autonomy and independence; norms such as avoidance of open conflict, consensus decision-making; and, attitudes such as the dislike of authority and its subjugating quality, and the belief in the positive nature of man are still visible and essential components.[8]

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[3]J.N. MacNeish, "Leadership Among the Northeaster Athabascans", Anthropologica, No. 2, 1956, p. 131. For a detailed discussion of social culture see MacNeish, op. cit., pp. 131-155; H.B. Hawthorn (ed.), A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada, Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa, Vols. I and II, 1967.

[4]MacNeish, op. cit., p. 140.

[5]Ibid., p. 134.

[6]Ibid., p. 140.

[7]Ibid., p. 140.

[8]See Hawthorn, op. cit., particularly Vol. 2, pp. 112-114, 127-130; and MacNeish, op. cit., pp. 138-140, 149-155.

Over time, however, there has been an increasing acceptance of non-Indian structural norms, particularly on the input side as witnessed in the use of the electoral system, interest group formation, utilization of national political parties as vehicles for transmitting demands, and the process of electing IBNHT officials, Chiefs, and Band Councillors (instead of, in the latter instances, the traditional recruitment method whereby a chief appointed his advisors or listened to the advice of the elders).[9] The same cannot, however, be said of either the output structures or the norms associated with them. The Territorial Councils are only of an incidental concern to Indians. Generally, at the subjective level, Indian attitudes expressed about these output structures can be best described as being unfavourable, approaching an apathy towards and a lack of indentification with the structures.[10]

Described thus, the political culture of Northeastern Denes has components which are fundamentally different from those of the whites. Consider, for comparison purposes, the political culture of white Territorial Government bureaucrats. Members of this group are occupationally linked with output structures (with the exception of Band Councils), and the majority but not all of them are allegiantly oriented towards a centralized and authoritarian system of government;[11] the Territorial Council, Executive Committee and bureaucracy, which are differentiated, highly specialized structures operating according to a set of clearly defined legal norms, are, to them, legitimate political structures. This group has members which have either idealist-democratic aspirations of conservative tendencies which are transmitted via policies and decisions. All are security oriented[12] and regardless of the internal variations, the competition and the conflicts, members are, generally, favourably predisposed towards an hierarchical and authoritatian system of leadership; the conservative allegiantly oriented members attempt to maintain the existing system while the idealist-democratic aspirants call for a strong and authoritarian leader to institute changes.

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[9]Hawthorn, op. cit., Vol I(B), p. 264; MacHeish, op. cit., p. 139.

[10]See, for example, A Paper on the Philosophy of the Department of Local Government, prepared for the Legislative Council of the Northwest Territories, January 10, 1975, pp. 16-40.

[11]I cannot confirm this statement empirically, instead I have relied upon my own observations and upon great works such as Almond and Verba, op. cit., pp. 24-26; and A. Downs, Inside Bureaucracy, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1967, pp. 25-26, 41-111.

[12]Ibid.

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⁹Hawthorn, op. cit., Vol 1(A), p. 244; Jacklash, op. cit., p. 196.

¹⁰See, for example, A Paper on the Philosophy of the Department of Local Government, prepared for the Legislative Council of the Northwest Territories, January 10, 1975, pp. 16-40.

¹¹I cannot confirm this statement empirically, instead I have relied upon my own observations and upon great works such as Almond and Verba, op. cit., pp. 26-26, and R. Downs, Inside Bureaucracy, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1967, pp. 26-26, 47-111.

¹²Ibid.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

The political culture of the Indian has been molded by many agents of socialization[13] - some are political, others non-political; some have negative consequences, others positive. Specific sources of socialization, which are of a political nature include the agencies of the federal government, particularly the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (DINA), agencies of the Government of the Northwest Territories, particularly the Department of Education and the Department of Local Government; Band Councils; and, the IBNWT. The effects of some of these agents, such as the IBNWT cannot be fully assessed because of their recent emergence in the North, but all have and will continue to influence the political behaviour of Indians.

A significant, if not the most significant source of political social-ization has been the federal government. In his monumental study, Hawthorn identifies three separate "ideological" positions that the federal government has taken [14] towards all Indians over an extended period of time which have affected their political culture. From 1667 to 1945, the federal government's policy towards Indians was paternalistic, endeavouring to protect and isolate Indians from "outside" contact. Paternalism, generally, did not affect the traditional, conservative elements of the Indians' diffused political role structures. Even the federal government's invention of "government" chiefs, elected or appointed as mediators between band members and government officials, during this period, did not affect any "significant changes or innovations in the political orientations"[15] of Indians in the Northwest Territories except that the prestige of the trading chief and the influence of shamanism declined

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[13]For literature dealing specifically with socialization of Indians in the Northwest Territories see J.W. Vanstone, "Changing Patterns of Indian Trapping in the Canadian Sub-arctic", Arctic, Vol. XVI, No. 3, 1963, pp. 159-174; R.K. Thomas and J.A. Mackenzie, "Survey Report to the Anglican Church on the Northwest Territories", in For Every North American Indian who Begins to Disappear I Also Begin to Disappear, Neewin Publishnng Company, Toronto, 1971, pp. 109-139; J.A. Mackenzie, "On the Demonic Nature of Institutions", op.cit., pp. 141-166. For general works see Hawthron, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 109-127.

[14]Hawthron, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 21-29. Hawthorn's typology is accepted as valid, however it is interpreted in such a manner as not to detract from the essence of his arguments yet allow one to apply the typology to the Indians of the Northwest Territories.

[15]MacNeish, op. cit., p. 135. Also see this page for references which agree with the position MacNeish takes on the effect of the federal government invention of "government chiefs". For an opposing view but related to Saskatchewan Indians see E.J. Dosman, Indians: The Urban Dilemma, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1972, pp. 161-162.

noticeably. In the years 1945 to 1965 the federal government's policy is
described by Hawthorn as being "democratic" (with strong inclinations towards
individual liberalism) which was intended to encourage individual Indian economic
initiative, and to integrate Indians into Canadian economic and social systems.
During this period came health services, schools and "abundance". A consequence
of this is that Indians, no doubt, perceived a connection between their
economic security and the white man's government. Try as they may, their legal,
economic and psychological dependence on government agencies worked against any
desires they might have had in being integrated into Canadian economic and
social systems.[16] Frustration with their unsuccessful attempts to enter and
compete in the Canadian mainstream of life compelled them to retrench still
further into political passivity.

The present position of the federal government towards the Indian is one
of egalitarian focussing upon: full and equal political participation in the
Canadian society "by the indian people under their own leaders"[17], but according
to Euro-Canadian political norms; and enjoyment by Indians of the same standard
of living and equal opportunities as non-Indians. One particular consequence of
this position was the creation of a corporate interest, the IBNWT. Initially,
Band Councils served as the only link between Indians and rational orgnaizations
such as DIAND. Indian officials who sat on Band Councils, represented leading[18]
Indian families and were sponsored and supported by the federal government.
The election process which is used to staff Band Councils and which is not
congruent with the parochial norms of having the chief appoint his own councillors[19]
by nature encourages dissension within bands, an antithesis to avoiding open
political conflict. Concurrent with this development, Indians came into contact
with their first "white" political activists; the Company of Young Canadians
(CYC), a group which left a significant imprint on the Indians' political
culture. Capitalizing on an atmosphere conducive to change, CYC officers
working closely with Indians, particularly individuals such as James Wah-Shee,
assisted in establishing a political structure which would speak for all Indians
in the Northwest Territories and counter the negative consequences of the
"election process" and the federal government sponsorship of "government"
chiefs. This structure came to be the IBNWT. Traditionally, lack of rigid
structure and a value system which favoured independence over dependence, were
factors which were instrumental in de-emphasizing corporatist notions of the
type characterizing the IBNWT. Corporate life, for example, "commonly extended

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[16] Hawthorn, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 162.

[17] Hawthorn, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 27.

[18] Dosman, op. cit., pp. 161-162.

[19] Hawthorn, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 178.

over a continuous and relatively long interval of time",[20]but it was not very
strong and what did exist was confined to inter-band affairs. Placed in a
situation where Indians had to associate with rational, highly organized
government agencies along with the need to compete with corporatist elements
in the Canadian society, intra-band corporatism was transformed into a strong
sense of inter-band corporate identity.

Another consequence of the most recent policy was the necessity of the
Band Councils and the IBNWT to bargain and negotiate with political structures
or a secularized political culture. Lacking political resources and expertise
to function as an effective interest group, the IBNWT recruited highly educated
Indians and, also, politically influential and active whites as consultants and
resource personnel and in some cases former CYC officers. Bands, on the other
hand, impelled by an identical force, elected Councillors exhibiting traditional
characteristics such as proper line of descent or kinship affiliations and also
those Indians who were above average in education, relative to their group
members, and fluent in the English language.[21] Furthermore, the bargaining
and negotiating Indians were required to perform to achieve their objectives,
assisted in creating an Indian elite charged with a strong sense of associational
identity as witnessed, for example, in the position taken on the land claims
issue[22], the election of James Wah-Shee to the Territorial Council by acclamation
in the Great Slave Lake constituency, and the election of Wally Firth to
Parliament as the member for the N.W.T constituency.

The Band Council is a socialization agent also; consensual decision-making,
communal sharing, autonomy and independence of the individual are reinforced
primarily through the social and ceremonial activities it organizes and regulates.
It is reasonably correct to state, for example, that order is still maintained
in the band solely by public opinion and to state, as MacLeish does, that "there
is...little or no effective authority beyond the coercive sentiment of the band,
which may be ignored or avoided by leaving the band or by changing allegiance."[23]

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[20]MacLeish, op. cit., p. 136.

[21]This is partly an extrapolation of Hawthorn's work (Vol. 2, pp. 228-
229) and partly based upon my own observations and discussions with government
officials.

[22]James Wah-Shee, "A Land Settlement - What does it mean?", presented
at the Conference on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline sponsored by the Canadian
Arctic Resource Committee, Toronto, May 23-24, 1974.

[23]J.A. Mason, Notes on the Indians of the Great Slave Lake Area,
Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 34, Yale University Press,
New Haven, 1946, p. 34, from MacLeish, op. cit., p. 136.

Another traditional norm which is maintained, one which reinforces the sectarian nature of Indian identity, is the exclusion of whites as members of Bands and Band Councils.[24] On the other hand, the method of recruiting councillors, and the negotiation and bargaining process that takes place between chiefs, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories and the Minister of DINA are not parochial but participant norms which form an integral part of Indian political behaviour. They are maintained by the very fact that they are practiced.

In addition to the above sources of political socialization, there are the output political structures of which the bureaucracy is the most influential. The Department of Education, for example, attempts to inculcate through the school system the values and norms of a participant culture which conflict, in some instances, with the parochial values and norms that the Indian children acquire through familial and associational linkages; specifically, the child encounters a value system which stresses competition, discipline and dependence.[25] The Department of Local Government, another influential agent of political socialization, has as one of its objectives the establishment of "a cadre of native-born administrators capable of replacing or at least sharing with southern officials in the administration of government".[26] To accomplish this, Indians are introduced to the specialized roles of a local governmental system, trained in administrative skills and provided with a pattern of values.[27]

Aside from the intentional attempts at political socialization, there are contacts between Indian and government officials at the interpersonal level which influence the former's attitude toward government. In extremely isolated communities where inter-personal relationships are intense, the effects of the contact can create a sense of adversion to and negativism about output structures, particularly, the bureaucracy.[28]

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[24]White women who marry Indians automatically assume Treaty Indian status.

[25]Mackenzie, op. cit., pp. 154-155; Hawthorn, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 63-174, particularly, pp. 112-120.

[26]Programs of the Government of the Northwest Territories, Dept. of Information, Yellowknife, September 16, 1974, p. 22.

[27]Ibid., pp. 21-22.

[28]See, for example, A.R. Zariwny, "A Case Study of Interpersonal Relationships of Government Employees in a Small Northern Community", Unpublished paper, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1969.

LEGITIMACY

Within the Indian elite group, there is a persisting view and an emerging view on the question of whether legitimacy should be accorded to output structures. The persisting view is that legitimacy should not be accorded since the existing output structures are not congruent with parochial values such as independence and autonomy of the individual nor for that matter, are they congruent with participant norms such as the selection of a leader through democratic processes. Underlying this view is the belief that Indians must preserve the purity of their value system. Irrespective of the genesis and intensity of this view, it does have political implications within the Indian group and, also, outside of it. Its continued persistence can, for example, contribute to the existing polarization of whites and Indians by thwarting political and occupational interaction. It may also materialize as a significant force creating cleavages within the Indian group. Indirectly, it also serves to set limits on the extent that the Territorial Government can speak for Indian people. For, according to this view, if any non-Indian political structure should be the federal Cabinet (or DINA) because of its supremacy over the output structures.

The emerging view expressed is that legitimacy is not an issue; instead the essential point is ensuring that the demands of Indian people are heard, and any structure which can serve as such a mechanism should be utilized. This view does not differentiate between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal regime that runs it.

It would appear that the "persisting" view is shared by the majority of Indians whereas the "emerging" view is shared by those Indians who have been socialized to accept the output political structures as legitimate. This has a degree of validity if one considers that Indians have, at least until recently, accorded legitimacy to political structures and accepted structural norms which do not force them to compromise the essential charactersstics of their political culture. Using as a guideline this position and using as criteria associational and occupational ties, and national and territorial voting statistics, it would be relatively safe for one to conclude that prior to the 1974 reforms, there were four political structures to which Indians accorded legitimacy: one output structure, the Band Council; and three input structures, the IBNWT, the electoral system and the national party system. The electoral system and the party system provided Indians with a vehicle to express their demands without prejudicing their values and, consequently, it was and still is favoured along with the IBNWT as an effective input structure. The Band Council is a structure which is congruent with the present political culture of Indians, and, therefore, has the allegiance of Indians. The creation, per se, of the IBNWT as an interest

group, the racial composition of its Board of Directors, its reliance on its own specialized and "open" bureaucracy, the political affiliation between the Band Council and the Board of Directors, would suggest a mixture of parochial and participant norms explaining why it also is a legitimate political structure to Indian people.

No output structures except possibly municipal councils, had, up until 1974, been legitimized by Indians. Why was this so? Some of the norms which serve as guiding principles for the operation of these structures are not congruent with the political culture of Indians. For example, the bureaucracy is a highly impersonal, authoritarian structure, submission to authority is an important and tolerable structural norm. By the nature of the bureaucracy, autonomy and independence are constrained, merit and competition emphasized. In contrast, as mentioned earlier, Indian familial and associational (and even occupational) ties are generally highly interpersonal and devoid of authoritarianism. A sense of autonomy and independence is inculcated at the family level and carried on into adulthood. Subjugation to coercive authority, a bureaucratic norm, was never fully developed with Indians nor was it a fundamental norm of behaviour.[29]

The Territorial Council and municipal councils are also structures not completely legitimized by Indians. When an Indian is elected to the Territorial Council (or municipal council) he brings with him the values, norms and attitudes of his culture which, understandably, impose severe constraints on his ability to exercise effective political power, power in white terms. We know, for example, that to become a leader of the band, an Indian must have numerous kinship affiliations and personal qualities such as success in hunting, "skill...in the management of the various tempers with which he has to deal". "the ability to attract, influence, manipulate others"[30], generousity and courage. His power and control over the band is "ordinarily trifling" and his authority is to put "his stamp of approval upon decisions or viewpoints arrived at by th group as a whole or more specifically, by his male peers."[31] In other words, the power of (even a strong) leader lies "in his influence rather than his 'legal' authority".[32] Compare this with the qualities of a rational, calculating, empirically oriented, legalistic white politician. Also, the continued absence of the Indian from the Territorial bureaucracy precludes socialization that a politician not acquainted with its structural norms, requires in order to work with and to question the bureaucracy's decisions.

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[29]MacNeish, op. cit., p. 154.

[30]Ibid., p. 153.

[31]Ibid., p. 151.

[32]Ibid.

For those who are elected, inexperience forces them to spend precious time
learning the norms of administration and government, aware all of the time
that there is the strong possibility they may undergo counter-socialization.
(Similar problems will be experienced by Indians if, and when they gain access
into the Executive Committee). Another factor working against the Indian
elected to the Territorial Council is that the Council displays a natural
propensity for conflict rather than compromise; open conflict is not generally
cherished by Indians.

REFORMS

Within the last year there have been a number of political and
administrative reforms implemented and proposed with the intent of improving
native access to and participation in the output political structures. The number
of seats on the Territorial Council was increased from 14 to 15, all Councillors
will be elected, and two of the Councillors will assume executive decision-making
powers.

A Task Force on Personnel Policy and Management was established by
Commissioner Hodgson in 1974 and chaired by Assistant Commissioner Ewan Cotterill.
Significant reforms recommended by the Task Force include implementing a general
orientation program for civil servants following their appointment; reflection
at all levels of bureaucratic management the ratio of native northerners
(defined in the Task Force Report as Indians, Inuit or Metis) to the population
of the Northwest Territories; creation of training positions available to native
northerners up to ten percent of the total establishment of the public services;
opening competitions to both men and women, and where possible, emphasizing in
these competitions a combination of experience and training as the equivalent to
academic qualifications that might otherwise be desirable; and, having recruitment
teams visit all schools in order to solicit the application of students for summer
employment.[33]

The Department of Local Government, upon the instructions of the
Territorial Council, has taken a position (unofficial as of yet) on the development
of local government in the Northwest Territories, the first of its kind for the
Territories. The municipal system is accepted as the modus operandi of legitimate
government at the local level on the assumption, though, that this form of
government will

"provide for the interests and fulfill the needs of the community".[34]

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[33]Report of the Task Force on Personnel Policy and Management,
Department of Information, Yellowknife, August 12, 1974, pp. 24-28.

[34]A Paper on the Philosophy of the Department of Local Government,
op. cit., p. 47.

On the other hand, if

> "*circumstances are such that this assumption proves ultimately ill-founded, then more suitable forms of local government will emerge and the Department holds itself prepared to make such accommodation as will recognize the legitimacy of these alternative forms.*"[35]

In order that the municipal system of government serve as "a means by which original people in the Northwest Territories may come to play a major role in all levels of government", the Department has proposed a massive development training program which will provide native people with "a working awareness of their particular interests rather than exclusively providing administrative instructions."[36]

The Department of Education, also upon the instructions of the Territorial Council, has compiled a handbook, called Government and Elections[37] which is to be used in adult education and school programs to socialize adults and children in the Northwest Territories to the output political structures and the norms associated with them.

CONSEQUENCES OF REFORMS

Ostensibly, the reforms attempt to encourage Indians to utilize existing output structures. If the reforms are successful, they will create a form of legitimacy which will see some but not all of the vestiges of colonial rule eliminated; and, in the process of providing access to these structures Indians will be exposed to different patterns of political behaviour with the consequence that some of the components of their political culture will also disappear. For example, the reforms directed at the Territorial Council should foster in Indians political attitudes favourable towards this output structure, particularly with members of the Indian elite such as James Wah-Shee sitting on the Council. No doubt with this reform the political credibility of the Territorial Government will increase substantially. It may even obtain a stronger sense of independence since its policy decisions will, supposedly, be accepted and supported by members of all groups. In addition, Indian non-elites will be able to perceive in tangible terms, the results of political participation, such as the assumption of political office by Indians.

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[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., p. 49.

[37]Government and Elections: A Handbook, Department of Education, Yellowknife, 1974.

It is questionable, though, how effective the changes in personnel policy as outlined in the Task Force Report will be. They are by far the most significant and commendable reforms yet to be introduced by the Territorial Government and, if successfully implemented, they will make the bureaucracy more or less "rationalized, unrivalled and open."[38] But to accomplish this the reforms must contend with all the Indian values, norms and attitudes which are in conflict with those of bureaucracy. It is doubtful, for example, that Indians will accept subjugation to bureaucratic authority in the foreseeable future, unless some extraordinary changes occur in their value system.

There are also some unresolved issues in the position taken by the Department of Local Government on local political development which could spell disaster for any good intentions which this particular agency has. The Department stresses the need to eliminate the compartmentalization of both native people and output structures. It suggests on the practical side the transfer of financial, administrative and political powers from the Territorial Government to municipal councils as a means of fostering native acceptance of output structures. Acceptance however, cannot occur unless Indian political culture is of a nature such that these structures are congruent with it, and this cannot materialize simply by a transfer of responsibilities from "top to bottom". The Department implicitly acknowledges this requisite through its training program but it does not indicate which political culture(s) and the elements contained therein, will serve as a basis for the training process it intends to carry out.

Unlike the above reform, one can fairly accurately surmise the impact of Government and Elections: A Handbook which will serve as a basis for civic education courses offered by the Department of Education. Time and method of teaching will play an important role in determining the extent and accuracy of the impact of this course on Indian children and adults; but, if one was to generalize about its approach to civic training, then it is possible to conclude that one consequence will be the depersonalization of politics since formal-legal rules regulating the political behaviour of output structures rather than the practical aspects of politics [39], such as how policy decisions are made, comprise the text.

Should all reforms achieve their objectives there will, unavoidably, be an encroachment upon the status of the traditional political authority -- the chiefs, particularly if the reward for taking active part in output structures is of such a nature that Indians switch their allegiance from Band Councils and the IBNWT to structures such as the Territorial Council, the bureaucracy and

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[38]J. Porter, "Higher Public Servants and the Bureaucratic Elite in Canada", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. 24, 1958, pp. 483-501.

[39]This parallels the traditional legal-formal approach used to teach students in Canadian schools and universities about Canadian politics.

municipal councils. A possible scenario might run something like this. The new Indian elite will continue to respect the exclusive social and ceremonial claims of the traditional authorities; they will retain some of the components of their parochial political culture; but, they will develop an allegiance to the specialized output structures. Consequently, what may occur is the fragmentation of the Indian group into two opposing sub-groups. In one instance traditional expectations of the chief would be strong enough, such as with the Dogrib Band, to demand of band members associational allegiance. In the other instance, the chief would not be strong enough to demand such an allegiance. What would occur in such situations is that the chiefs' powers would be delimited so as to encompass only traditional roles. However, scenario's are only scenario's; time will tell if the reforms will pose a threat to the traditional authorities and whether associational ties will remain strong enough to permit chiefs to maintain their status.

CONCLUSION

This paper lacks a definitive quality, one characteristic of a study which has a solid empirical foundation. But, it also conveys a different type of uncertainty, not related specifically to the absence of hard facts. I think it is safe to conclude that there is uncertainty about the political future of the Northwest Territories. It is not so much uncertainty about the structures of the Territorial Government or about the abundance or lack of economic development or its leaders, as it is about the political attitudes, norms and values of the various groups which make up the north. Having taken this stance, however, it can be said (confining one's observation to the terms of reference of this paper) that Indian people have a distinct impression about the Territorial Government -- they have not fully accepted it.

A change or modification of values, norms and attitudes is a necessary condition for the future political development of the Northwest Territories, particularly if legitimacy is not to become an unresolvable problem. The reforms noted in this paper attempt to overcome a perceived problem related to legitimacy and some predictions based on the political culture of the Indian have been made about their impact; but, the definitiveness of the consequences mentioned is open to debate, as they should be, since all have implications which cannot be precisely determined at this time. We still, therefore, do not have empirical answers to many questions.

. We have seen within a relatively short time span, Indian political attitudes of passivity turn to high levels of political activity and commitment in order to achieve goals which can meet the technological advances of the Canadian society head on yet benefit Indian people. The main vehicle for this activity has been the IBNWT. Will the reforms have the effect of relegating the IBNWT to an insignficant status since new vehicles for political activity are being offered? Will these new vehicles be able to accommodate interests which conflict with each other?

2. The reforms will intentionally and unintentionally socialize the Indian and influence the behaviour groups display towards each other. Who or what group(s) will assume a normative role in deciding which structures and cultural components are to be retained and which new ones should be established?

3. James Wah-Shee, President of the IBNWT, is a member of the Territorial Council. Will this create any perceptible change in the way Indians perceive the Territorial Government as a whole, its policies and their role as individuals in the overall political system?

4. If the recommendations of the Task Force are fulfilled, the Territorial bureaucracy will be staffed at various levels with Indian people. What effect will this have on their attitudes towards, for example, authority?

5. If the position paper of the Department of Local Government is made operational, will it facilitate the organization of a minority opinion within the Indian group, one that could become allegiant to the output structures? Will this pose a threat to the survival of the Band Council and even the IBNWT itself? What levels of political participation and activity will the Indian elite define as acceptable to reach for without upsetting the cohesiveness of the Indian culture?

6. What effect will the content and method of teaching have on the values, attitudes and norms Indians have towards politics?

7. Present policies and programs of the Territorial Government such as the Outpost Camp Policy, the Interpreter-Translator Corp program and Arts and Crafts program, to name a few, can, without empirical validation, be stated to have the support of Indian people. Will the reforms be successful in creating further support for Territorial Government policies? What effect will this have on the policies of the Federal Government and its political and administrative powers in the Northwest Territories?

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Date Due

JUL 26 '82			
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